1; Belgrave F-3 (no date) 1953 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

Part I.—GENERAL INFORMATION.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

BAHRAIN is an independent Arab State ruled by His Highness Shaikh Sulman bin Hamed al-Khalifah, K.C.M.G., K.C.I.E. The state consists of an archipelago of small low-lying islands situated about half-way down the Persian Gulf, some 20 miles from the Arab coast and slightly less distant from the Qatar Peninsular. In the past Bahrain owed its importance to its position as the centre of the pearl industry of the Persian Gulf; today it is better known for its oil field and refinery.

"Bahrain" or more correctly "al-Bahrain" means "The Two Seas" and this name, which was formerly applied to the whole coast of Eastern Arabia from Kuwait to Qatar, has long puzzled Arab philologists. Many derivations of the name have been suggested. One is that the two seas are the Persian Gulf and the pool of sweet water below the sands which irrigates the gardens of Qatif and Bahrain. Another, suggested by the writer al-Ashari, is that there was once a great salt lake near Hasa, which was the second of the two seas. A third suggestion is that the name "Bahrain" has some connection with the submarine springs (Ar. singular 'Ain) of fresh water that are found in many places along the coast of Arabia. However a serious objection to this theory is that 'Ain starts with an Arabic letter which is not present in the spelling of "Bahrain." There are other places called Bahrain in Egypt, North Africa and in Persia.

There are five principal islands in the group, whose total area is approximately 231 square miles; the largest is Bahrain itself, which is about 30 miles long and from 8 to 10 miles wide. A causeway 1½ miles in length, carrying a motor road, links Manama, capital of the State, which is on the north-east tip of Bahrain island, with the neighbouring town and island of Muharraq. Half-way down the east coast of Bahrain a bridge connects Bahrain with Sitra island. Among the other islands of the group are Nebih Salih, north of Sitra, whose prolific fresh water springs irrigate the date groves which cover the island and which are said to be the best in Bahrain; Jidda, a small rocky islet off the west coast of Bahrain, now used as a penal settlement; and Umm an-Nasaan, a large low-lying island to the south-west of Jidda, which H.H. The Ruler has developed as a breeding place for gazelle and black buck.

Some miles south of Bahrain and very near the coast of Qatar are the 16 islands of the Howar group, the largest of which is 11 miles in

Part II.—THE HISTORY OF THE BAHRAIN ISLANDS.

175 Of all the Persian Gulf shaikhdoms the Bahrain islands have had by far the most interesting and varied history, of which this brief outline must of necessity mention only the most outstanding events. The riches of Bahrain's ancient pearling industry have drawn the attention of many rulers to the islands, whose strategic position and fresh-water springs have meant that for centuries there has been a settled population.

●101 175 It is believed that the names Niduk-ki and Dilmun (or Tilwun) which appear in Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions found in Iraq were the ancient names of the Bahrain islands, in which case events in Bahrain's history are recorded from the third millennium B.C., as long as 5,000 years ago.

Unfortunately only one cuneiform inscription has been found in Bahrain itself, an inscription which has been translated as follows: "The Palace of Rimugus, the servant of Inzaq (Mercury) of the tribe of Aqiru."[1]

This inscription appears to have been removed from a Bahrain mosque by its finder, Captain Durand, and its present whereabouts is unknown.

The place-name Niduk-ki appears in the Babylonian myth of the Creation, while the Assyrians also had a tradition that their civilisation, and more especially the invention of the cuneiform script, originated in Dilmun. The tumuli of Bahrain bear a very striking resemblance to Phoenician graves, a fact noticed by many writers from the time of Strabo to the present day. Archaeologists who have studied them are, however, still unable to agree as to their origin beyond saying that they are of great antiquity.

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175 The first historical reference to Bahrain appears in an inscription concerning the conquests of Sargon of Akkad, who reigned in the third millennium B.C. In this inscription he is described as having reduced Niduk-ki and another seaport, and during the following centuries there are many references to Niduk-ki and Dilmun, giving the impression that the places referred to were both islands and trading centres. In 1820 B.C. a king of Larsa, in Southern Mesopotamia, sent a trading expedition to Bahrain, obtaining there stone, metals, wood and ivory, materials probably brought to Bahrain from India. Towards the end of the eighth century B.C. another Sargon, the Assyrian monarch also gained control of Dilmun by means of threats and economic pressure, and we have an interesting description of the contemporary Bahraini ruler: "Uperi, king of Dilmun, who lives like a fish, thirty double hours away in the midst of the sea of the rising sun, heard of my lordly might and brought his gifts."

1 [For footnote see Cat. 116, p. 87 — Analyst]

The inhabitants of Dilmun also sent tribute to Sennacherib the son of Sargon, after he had sent them some of the debris of Babylon, which he had destroyed, as a sign of the fate in store for cities that incurred his displeasure.

After the fall of the Assyrian empire in the seventh century B.C. we hear no more about Bahrain until the time of the Macedonian adventure in the East, when Alexander sent three vessels on voyages of exploration down the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf. Two ships under the commands of Archias and Androsthenes sailed only as far as the island of Tylos, which has been identified with Bahrain. Later Roman geographers seem to have become somewhat confused in their descriptions of the Persian Gulf, and while Arrian applies the name of Tylos to Bahrain, on the map of Ptolemy Bahrain appears as Ichara and Tylus and Arathus are shown at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Whatever were the ancient names of Bahrain, it is interesting to note that the name Aradus is still applied to part of Muharraq in the Arabic form *Arad*.

After the fall of the Mesopotamian civilisations no foreign power seems to have controlled Eastern Arabia until early in the fourth century A.D., when Arab tribes from that area raided Fars and sacked many of its cities. The young Sassanid king Shapur II repelled the invaders and carried the campaign into their own territories. He landed on the Arabian coast and annexed East Arabia and Bahrain to Persia, which acquisitions were later placed under the authority of the King of Hira, an Arab buffer state on the south-west border of Sassanid Persia.

THE COMING OF ISLAM

A somewhat confusing aspect of the history of Bahrain is the change in nomenclature which took place in the Persian Gulf during Portuguese activity there. From the third to the sixteenth century, the name "Bahrain" was applied to the whole coast of Eastern Arabia from Kuwait to Qatar, while the main Bahrain island was known as *Awal*, but since the last date the name "Bahrain" has been applied to the islands. In the following passages the modern names will be used to simplify matters.

When the first Moslems came to Eastern Arabia they found there a people strangely mixed in their beliefs. There were Christians and Jews, Zoroastrians who followed the state religion of Sassanid Persia, and pagan Arab Bedouin. The local governor for the Persians was a Christian Arab, Mundhir bin Sawa by name, and according to Syrian Christian records of the late seventh century, there were in Arabia at this time five Nestorian bishops, one of whom appears to have been bishop of the Bahrain islands. The Christian viceroy and many of his Court accepted Islam, but on his death, and again on the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the bedouin, who made up the bulk of converts, if indeed they had really been converted, "apostasized," and it required expeditions from Medina to restore the country to the Moslems.

There is a bus service between Hedd and Muharraq and also a few taxi cabs in the town.

In addition to the towns of Muharraq and Hedd the island of Muharraq is fringed by many villages ; going north round the coast from Muharraq town they include Busatin, Dair, Raiya, Galali and Arad. The first three villages contain many homes of members of the Ruling Family and are especially popular in the summer when the Muharraq weather is considered superior to that of Manama. Galali is a sizeable village inhabited by fishermen and industrial workers, while Arad is the centre of the agriculture of the island and is built near a large pool in the centre of the date gardens on Arad peninsular. The inhabitants of the village work in the gardens, but on the shores of the Bay near the old Omani fort is a large village built entirely of barastis. In the summer this temporary village is entirely filled with people from Muharraq who spend the nights here, crossing by ferry every day to Muharraq town.

In general Muharraq island is very low-lying, so much so that it was thought at one time that there was a danger of the sea affecting the efficiency of the Airport, but this has been removed by pumping stations around the field which remove, when necessary, surplus water from the runways. It was, however, found necessary to build a raised road from Muharraq town to Hedd, for when there was any rain or an exceptionally high tide the road was often blocked.

UMM ASH-SHAGAR ISLANDS AND UMM ASH-SHIYAIRA

These are the two islands that lie to the south of Hedd town; the former, to the north, is covered with small stone and barasti houses; the second, whose name is a diminutive of the first, contains only barastis and is inhabited by fishermen.

THE ISLANDS

In addition to these two, there are several other small islands south of Muharraq, of which the three largest, although none of them is more than a few hundred square yards in area, are Halat-as-Suluta, Halat-al-Khulaifat and Abu Mahur.

The first two islands lie to the south of Arad peninsular and at low tide they are joined by a sand-bar which permits walking between them. They contain small villages, whose people derive their livlihood from fishing, and they are lucky enough to have on them fresh water springs. Abu Mahur, the third and largest island, is in fact named after one of the largest of these springs, which is in the sea a short distance from the shore. The fort of Abu Mahur is now in ruins but the island is now used as a quarantine station.

The fresh water submarine springs south of Muharraq and the manner in which the people obtain water from them has astounded

312 many of the travellers who have visited the islands. Men with deflated sheepskins dive down to the spring and place the mouth of the skin over the place where the fresh water emerges ; the skin then fills with fresh water and when full the diver comes to the surface. Before artesian wells were drilled in Bahrain both Muharraq and Manama obtained much of their water in this way, but today, owing to artesian piped wells and water systems, the undersea springs are little used except those to the north of Bahrain near the pearling banks. A Turkish traveller who visited Bahrain in 1554, Sidi Ali, says of the submarine springs, "The sailors provided with a leather sack, dive down into the sea and bring the fresh water from the bottom for Rais Murad's (the Governor of Bahrain) use. This water is particularly pleasant and cold in spring time. God's Power is boundless !" There is a 173 legend concerning the spring of Abu Mahur which says that in the time of the Caliph Merwan (684-685) a certain Ibn Hakim, a chief in Qatif, wished to marry the lovely daughter of a Bahrain shaikh. His suit was refused and so he attacked the islands and captured all the wells which supplied the towns on Bahrain Island, but the guardian diety of the Bahrainis caused the well Abu Mahur to appear in the sea near Muharraq to succour his people.

NABIH SALIH

101 A most attractive island is Nabih Salih, set in the Khor-al-Kab
529 between Umm al-Hassan and the mainland of Bahrain. With its thick cultivation, for the date palms run right down to the sea shore, and its many springs, including a large pool much frequented by
[788] bathers, Nabih Salih is a very popular place for visitors. In addition to its pool it is a place of pilgrimage for the Shia of Bahrain who go to pay their respects to the tomb of Salih after whom the island is named. The date palms of the island are particularly fine, they compare very favourably with those elsewhere in Bahrain, which is mainly due to the pool already mentioned, Safahiya, which irrigates much of the island.
[E05] Nabih Salih can be visited by launch or sailing boat, the nearest point to it on Bahrain is Ain al-Hakim ; boats can also be obtained from Umm al-Hasan or from Sitra. People have been known to swim to the island, but this is not the only way of getting there and in the summer this method is inclined to be rather exhausting.

SITRA

[101] South of Nabih Salih and close to the coast of Bahrain is Sitra
361 Island, which in addition to its many villages and gardens contains the Tank Farm and Drum Plant of BAPCO and the land end of the jetty. The site of these installations is a strip of bare and often sea-swept sands, but to the north of the island there are many gardens and a sizeable pool, Ain Raha, which is much visited by the people of Muharraq and Manama. Among the villages of North Sitra are Wadiyan, Sufala, Kharijya and Kuriya. Near the third village is a school and police station. To the south of the island is Umm al-Baidh, literally "Mother

of the Egg," a small village with many seafaring inhabitants. To the north of Sitra there is a very pleasant sandy beach looking towards Umm a-Hasan where there is excellent bathing; the view also includes Nabih Salih and Jaziyra. There is deep water to the north of Sitra, and it is here that the Bahrain Government is building the new Port of Manama with a pier running into deep water from the shore between Umm al-Hasan and Jufair.

361 [504]

JIDDA

This island is about 2½ miles from Budaiya. It is small and rocky and in appearance unlike any of the other Bahrain Islands. Its high cliffs rise abruptly from the water and a few fort-like buildings are silhouetted against the sky-line. On the south side of the island there is a level strip of land which is extensively cultivated. Jidda is Bahrain's penal settlement; here all long term prisoners are detained, spending their time cutting stone, weaving and working in the gardens. There is a small house on the top of the cliffs above the jetty which catches all the wind in the summer and which is used by the Adviser to the Bahrain Government. Being a prison island, Jidda is forbidden to general visitors.

101 133 697 [486]

The stone quarries at Jidda are of great age and it is likely that the large stones which line the graves in the burial mounds were cut here. There is an Arabic inscription roughly cut on one of the cliffs which reads as follows :

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"During the month of Shaban in the year 968 (April/May, 1561) there was completed the cutting of the 100,000th rock for the mending of the tower of the Bahrain fort in the wazirate of the Great Wazir Jilal ad-Din Murad Mahmud by the hand of the slave . . . " (a few words after this are unreadable).

UMM AN-NASAAN

This, the second largest of the Bahrain islands, lies a few miles across the shallow water to the south of Jidda. It is sandy and flat, with the exception of two small limestone hills towards its centre which break the monotony of its shape. At the north end of the island there are several natural springs and artesian wells from which extensive date gardens are irrigated; they were planted by the late Ruler of Bahrain, H.H. Shaikh Hamed, who also established on the island a herd of black buck and gazelle, the former being imported from India and the latter from the mainland of Bahrain.

101 133 312 [136]

There is evidence of ancient habitations on Umm an-Nasan, foundations of many old houses are visible and sherds of pottery can be picked up. Local legend has it that Nasaan, after whom the island is named, was one of the early rulers of Bahrain, but this legend has not been substantiated by historical research.

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HOWAR ISLANDS

101 This group of 16 islands is about twelve miles south-east of Ras al-Barr. It consists of one large island, Howar itself, which is about eleven miles long and a mile in breadth, and fifteen other islands much smaller in size. In the centre of the main island there is a rocky [361] eminence known as al-Jebal. There are only two villages, the larger one at the northern end on the shore of the bay consists of stone huts [625] with mat roofs (Kubbar); it also has a small mosque. The Bahrain State Police maintain a garrison on the island, in a fort which dominates [162] the bay and from the roof of which the Qatar peninsular is visible. The islands are inhabited by fishermen from Bahrain and also by men [312] who come to cut gypsum which they sell in Bahrain. The water supply of the island is very limited and consists of old cisterns cut out of living rock which are filled by rain. Attempts to drill for water have failed, but in the years when there is normal or plentiful rainfall the island provides good grazing for camels and sheep. Fishing in the 133 bay is excellent, the water is comparatively deep and a launch can 503 come alongside the short jetty. The southern tip of the island is so close to the Qatar coast that when the tide is out boats cannot pass between the island and the shore, but at one place between Howar and Qatar, a long narrow channel has been hewn out of the coral sea bed to allow boats to pass through a shallow stretch of water. This submarine canal was made by a certain Isa ibn Tarif, a notorious pirate, who played an important part in the history of Bahrain during the middle of the last century; he used the channel as a passage to his fortress on the Qatar coast from where he sallied forth to attack the shipping around Bahrain.

132 The climate of Howar is noticeably better than in Bahrain, it is drier and cooler during the summer nights, but has no other amenities to attract visitors fleeing from the dampness of Bahrain, and at present its only visitors go there for work and not for pleasure.

ZUBARA

361 On the coast of the Qatar peninsular opposite the Bahraini village 172 of Jaw is the ruined town and the bay of Zubara, which has already been mentioned in detail in the history of Bahrain in Part II. The town of Zubara is on the east of the bay and stretches about 1½ miles along the coast and 2 miles inland. The ruins of the town are still impressive. The high wall which surrounds the wide straight streets and the fine mosques, the obvious care with which the town was laid out, speaks well for those who governed it. Further east of the town, at a distance of about two miles across the desert, is the great fort; some of the walls and the mosque are still standing. At the corners of the walls are towers with slits for rifles and the domed roof of the mosque presents an attractive picture. The whole building is made from local stone and little gypsum was used in its construction. Within the fort there are two wells one of which is dry, but the other still

6:Faroughy H-5 (no date)1951 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

INTRODUCTION

About midway of the Persian Gulf and some fifteen miles off the coast of Arabia, lie the Bahrein Islands at the mouth of the Gulf of Bahrein, of which the Qatar Peninsula forms the western side. There are five principal islands, only two of which are of real consequence. The largest and by far the most important is variously called Awal, Al Manāmah after the principal city, or more commonly just Bahrein. The last is the modern designation.

In ancient times, the name "Bahrein" was applied to a larger area which included the Arabian mainland of Qatar and Hajar and the land situated between Mesopotamia and the Gulf of Oman (the Indian Ocean); this area took in the entire southern coast of the Persian Gulf. This has caused widespread misinterpretation of much of the writings of pre-Islamic and Medieval historians. Throughout this book we shall use the term "Bahrein" in its modern sense to refer to the archipelago of Bahrein proper or to the central island, except where the mainland province is clearly indicated.

Bahrein today has few attractions. There is not much to recommend it as a place of residence, as it is intensely hot for about seven months of the year, and for many of the native inhabitants lacking in comfortable living conditions. For tourists it is rather off the beaten track. Nevertheless, through the centuries these bits of land have been considered well worth fighting for by both European and Asiatic empires.

The reason for Bahrein's unusual and enduring importance can be summed up in two words—pearls and strategy. The pearl fisheries of Bahrein have been known all over the world since the dawn of history and, thanks to an abundance of fresh water springs, the island was a frequent stopping place for ships on the trade routes to India and the Far East.

The Portuguese, the first European power to have an Asiatic colonial empire, fought hard for possession of the islands.

6:Faroughy H-5 (no date)1951 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

THE BAHREIN ISLANDS

THE NAME

"The name of Bahrein, which means 'Two Seas,' is derived, according to the natives of the country, from the existence of two strata of water located there. The higher film is extremely salty, whereas the deeper consists of sweet water with a very pleasant taste." So wrote Masoudi, the famous Arabian author.

Ibn Khallakan has a different explanation. He cites the Persian lexicographer Al-Ashari as follows: "Al-Bahrein ('The Two Seas') is so named because in the region where its towns are situated, near the gate of Al-Ahsa and the village of Hajar, there is a lake at ten parsangs distance from the Great Green Ocean [the Persian Gulf]. The lake is three miles long and as many broad. It does not overflow, and its waters are tranquil and salt."

According to Al-Jawahari, the author of *Sahah,* the inhabitants are called Bahrani rather than the more usual form Bahri, because "the latter term might be misunderstood, having as it does another meaning, namely 'Belonging to the sea.' "[1]

GEOGRAPHY

The Bahrein Islands are situated at 26° latitude north and 50° longitude east on the southern side of the Persian Gulf. They are about fifteen miles from the main coast of Saudi

1. Throughout this book, however, we shall use the modern designation "Bahreini" when referring to the people.

[pp. 10, 11, 12 have no textual information]

Muharraq Island

This is the second largest island of the group and in all probability the "Aradus" of the classical writers. It is located northeast of Bahrein and is about five and a half square miles in area, horseshoe shaped and only a mile wide. It is separated from Bahrein by a channel spanned by a causeway a mile and a half long with a motor road and by a swinging bridge which was completed in 1941.

The chief city is MUHURRAQ, on the western side, the second largest city in the islands and the summer residence of the Sheik. Its population is about 26,000. Muhurraq and Manama, on Bahrein Island, are each administered by a Municipal Committee which in addition to civic duties are jointly responsible for the upkeep of thirty per cent of the roads in the archipelago.

Other towns among the sixteen or more on Muhurraq which should be mentioned are:

ARAD. This is an important date producing center with some sixteen thousand palm trees, on the southern shore of the Gulf of Arad. It is inhabited by the Baharinah.

HADD. Second in importance only to Muhurraq, Hadd is the leading pearl fishing center of the islands. It has a population of almost 10,000, consisting of Sādāt and Beni Yās. Since the English began to take a direct hand in the administration of the island it has become possibly the most modern of the cities, with many up-to-date homes and an agricultural experiment station as well as a modern penitentiary and the cottage of the British Financial Adviser.

The villages of Basatin, Qalali, Samahij and Dair, on the north and northeast coasts, are also important. Their population follows the Sunnite faith exclusively and those in Qalali belong to the Manani'a tribe.

Muhurraq Island has a military and civil airfield used by the British Overseas Air Service. The field has limited fueling and repair facilities for normal traffic as well as minimum lighting, runway lights, and lighted wind indicators. There are hard surface, all weather runways with an elevation of two feet; the

longest runway, to the nearest hundred feet, is 7400 feet long. 508
There are radio communication and direction finder with voice, 712
and the Radio Bahrein tower operates on 6440 kilocycles, 117.9 mc.

The other principal islands of the Bahrein group are: 101

SITRA, which is separated from Bahrein by the Sitra Canal, 162
which is about a quarter of a mile wide. The southern part of 361
the island is completely barren but in the north there are small villages, mostly inhabited by Baharinah farmers and fishermen. The most important are Wadiyan, Kharijia, Muhazza and Sufala, all of which are important date growing centers.

NABBI SĀLIH, the smallest of the five islands, situated about three quarters of a mile off the coast of Bahrein. There are palm groves and two small fishing centers, Kaflan and Karya. The island has many gardens and orchards as well as palm groves with some fifteen thousand trees. It is entirely inhabited by the Baharinah.

UMM NA'SAN, two miles west of Bahrein, a low and sandy island four miles long and triangular in shape. The island is dominated by two rocky peaks, one rising to an elevation of sixty-six feet at about half a mile from the western point of the island, and the other twenty-five feet high situated about half a mile farther to the east. Near the west coast there is a water source used by the people of the west coast of Bahrein, mostly the towns of Badaiya'a and Zallāq, whose custom it is to send their cattle to graze there during the summer.

Besides these principal islands there are a number of smaller 101
ones, mostly inhabited. From north to south and west to east 162
these are:

KHASAIFA.

JARDI.

SAYA, with its fresh water spring, located about half a mile off the west coast of Muharraq Island.

ABU MAHIR, a small island south of Muharraq and connected to it at low tide. There is a small fort on the [712]
island erected for the defense of the water source which [3 12]
formerly supplied the people of Muharraq

101
162 formerly supplied the people of Muharraq. The inhabitants, who are divers and fishermen, belong to the Sunnite sect.

NAIM, SULUTA, and KHULAFFAT are three small islands in the Gulf of Arad.

Farther east are:

[312] ABU SHAHIN, with its fresh water spring.

UMM SHAJAR.

UMM SHIYARA.

Mention should also be made of the three small, rocky islands north of Sitra bearing the name of Kasr (Castle) and farther south, opposite the village of Askar, the little island of Mashaikh with its fishing huts.

Off the east coast there are many others which are rocky islands or mere shoals and of no interest to us. Among them are the small islands of Raka and Cliff, El Ben farther north, and Yusuf closer to the coast.

ANTIQUITIES

172 The north central part of Bahrein Island is covered with thousands of large tombs in the form of mounds of rock heaped with earth which are among the unsolved mysteries of Near Eastern archaeology. Their number has been variously estimated at from fifteen thousand to several hundred thousand—so many in fact as to be completely out of proportion to the size of the island and its possible ability to support in ancient times a population to match the size of this enormous cemetery.

The tombs are ancient burial vaults of large dressed stones erected at ground level, sometimes with a second story. After the interment the vault was covered with a mound of gravel, stone chips, and earth, obtained largely at the foot of the cliffs surrounding the central basin of the island. The mounds vary greatly in size, ranging from four to eighty feet high and up to one hundred feet in diameter. Some of the largest tombs show the remains of outer walls, while others seem to have been surrounded by rings of heaped up gravel to keep intruders

7:Khaddurí S-4 (no date)1951 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2
Iran MA1

I 648 B 648

protests against this concession and considers itself at liberty to claim and demand the restitution of any profit that may accrue from such concessions, as well as compensation for any damage that may result therefrom. . . .[3]

In view of the fact that Iran's claim to sovereignty over Bahrayn had been reiterated in the past on several occasions, it is likely that such a claim might be put forth again under favorable circumstances. After the second World War the issue was revived by Prime Minister Qawam as-Sultanah in 1946. He announced that all oil produced in Bahrayn and shipped to the Iranian mainland would be taxed at the same rate as that produced by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. If Iran's claim to the sovereignty of Bahrayn is valid, the Oil Nationalization Act, unless it specifically excludes Bahrayn or unless the Act by its terms applies only to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, must *ipso jure* apply to the Bahrayn Petroleum Company. While such claims have often been disregarded, they might assume a certain seriousness should the *Tudeh* Party seize power and, supported or inspired by Russia, seek excuses for intervention in the Persian Gulf by raising the question of Iran's claim to sovereignty over Bahrayn.

B 101 131

Before turning to a discussion of the validity of Iran's claim, a word on the geography of the Bahrayn Islands might be useful. The term "Bahrayn" (which means the "two seas") was originally applied to the continental coast of Arabia (al-Hasa), the peninsula of Qatar, and the group of islands which separate the bay between Hasa and Qatar into the "two seas." But this term came to be applied only to those islands which form the "two seas." The Bahrayn Islands are an archipelago of coral formation (except perhaps the rocky hills in the center of the largest island) which includes Bahrayn, the largest (it is 27 miles long by 10 wide), Muharraq (second in size, five miles in length, and situated to the north of Bahrayn), Sitrah, Umm Na'san and a number of smaller islands. This archipelago was famous for its pearl fisheries from antiquity and more recently for the oil resources which have been discovered since the first World War. Its strategic value may assume an increasing importance should Communism penetrate southward towards Iran, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf.[4]

[3] The British Government had already objected to the grant of oil concessions to other Powers, but the United States State Department, pressing for equal opportunities for American interests, secured British agreement to the participation of American interests in the oil of Bahrayn. For an exchange of notes on this matter see Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929, Vol. III (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1944), pp. 80–82.

[4] For the geography of the Bahrayn Islands, see J. Theodore Bent, "The Bahrayn Islands in the Persian Gulf," Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, Vol. XII (January, 1890), pp. 1–19; Captain A. W. Stiffe, "Ancient Trading Centers of the Persian Gulf, VII: Bahrein," The Geographical Journal, Vol. XVIII (September, 1901), pp. 291–294; Maynard Owen Williams, "Bahrein: Port of Pearls and Petroleum," The

[FOR The rest of the footnote see p. 633]

8:Qubain S-5 (1952-53)1955 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

SOCIAL CLASSES AND TENSIONS IN BAHRAIN

Fahim I. Qubain

(See map, facing p. 239.)

ONE OF THE more interesting principalities in the Persian Gulf is the tiny island shaykhdom of Bahrain. Its geographical location, its maritime commerce, and its ancient pearl industry have all combined to create a multi-group society of its small population of about 110,000. On the whole, the country is well and efficiently governed, the various groups in the population have by generations of experience learned to tolerate each other, and crime in the Western sense of the word is almost nonexistent. At the same time, latent tensions exist that can be exploited if the proper circumstances arise. For instance, riots broke out between the Sunnis and the Shi'is during Muharram in September 1953. It took the use of the whole police force and the imposition of a curfew to bring peace back to the country.[1] In July of the following year, when some Shi'is were convicted for being involved in a fight with Sunnis, the whole Shi'i sect staged a demonstration, conducted an attack on a police post during which four Shi'is were killed, and finally all Shi'i workers went on strike.[2] Six months later, in December 1954, another general strike took place in support of demands made to the government for certain reforms which had already been promised by the ruler.[3] We propose, in this article, to examine the nature of these tensions and to evaluate their seriousness for the future.

POPULATION BREAKDOWN AND DISTRIBUTION

Until 1941 only estimates existed regarding the population of the Bahrain cluster of islands. In that year, the government, primarily for food control purposes, conducted the first census in the history of the islands; in 1950 a second census was taken. At that time the population was 109,650.[4] (See Tables I, II, and III.)

[1] Government of Bahrain, *Official Gazette*, September 24, 1953, p. 3.
[2] *Times* (London), July 13, 1954, p. 7.
[3] *Ibid.*, December 6, 1954, p. 7.
[4] Government of Bahrain, *Census 1950* (Bahrain, 1950).

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[See p. 270, cat. 116 -- Analyst]

8:Qubain S-5 (1952-53)1955 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

Over 61 percent of this population lives in the three towns of Manamah, Muharraq, and Hedd;[5] the rest, 38.5 percent, is scattered about in 90 villages and hamlets concentrated mostly in the northern and northeastern tip of the largest island. In the 9-year period between the two censuses the population had increased 22 percent, mainly in the three towns mentioned. The village population remained almost stationary (actually an absolute increase of 3.5 percent and a relative decrease of 5.5 percent). The concentration of increase in the towns can be explained by the better sanitary conditions existing there and the influx of foreigners. Evidently there was little local migration during this period from village to town, although in some cases it was found that villages had been deserted or greatly reduced in size.[6] It is interesting to note that the only population movement took place in some of the Arab Sunni villages.[7]

Tables I and III are in a certain sense misleading, for they give a false picture of homogeneity in the population (84 percent Bahrain subjects, 96 percent Muslims) that does not exist. Society in Bahrain is divided into several groupings, in most cases distinct and recognizable. Association with one group in many instances implies a certain occupational specialization, but the main forces that have determined social division are religion, tribal loyalties, and nationality.

THE SHI'IS AND THE SUNNIS

The Muslim Arab population of Bahrain is divided into Shi'is and Sunnis, who in almost all cases never live in the same village. The Shi'is live in their own tightly-knit communities and do not intermix with the rest of the population to any considerable degree. Fighting — especially in the larger towns, when the two communities do come into contact — frequently breaks out between the two groups, necessitating the intervention of the police and even the British navy.[8] A recent index of the feeling between the two groups is the fact that for the last several years there has been no municipal council for the capital city, Manamah, for the simple reason that no agreement could be reached on the number of seats to be allotted each of the two Muslim groups.

Aside from the small minority of Persians, the Shi'is are all Baharnah. There is no agreement as to the ethnic origin of these people; however, they now speak Arabic and are regarded as Arabs. They are the oldest group among the present inhabitants of the shaykhdom and have been subjected through the centuries to successive conquests, so that altho gh at present they equal or exceed the Sunnis in number — as the 1941 census

[5] See Table II.
[6] *Census 1950*, p. 6.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[8] Abbas Faroughy, *The Bahrain Islands* (New York, 1951), p. 99.

8:Qubain S-5 (1952-53)1955 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

indicates — they constitute the poorer and lower classes of society and manifest all the markings of a minority group. Until recently they lived hardly above the servile state, their occupational specialization being exclusively the cultivation of the soil and other menial labor. The arrival of the British, which has assured them some security in person and a guarantee of minimum rights, and the development of the oil industry, which has opened possibilities of alternative employment, have had the effect of gradually raising these people from their status as second-class citizens.

The Sunnis act as the majority group. This has been especially true since a Sunni tribe established its political dominance over the islands in the 18th century. The Sunnis present a common front toward other groups; among themselves, however, they are divided into several communities and tribes. The largest Sunni community is the Huwalah. Its members are townsmen living by trade; and as townsmen everywhere, they do not manifest marked feelings of solidarity. They can perhaps be regarded as the nucleus of a future middle class.

The Utab, if not the largest Sunni tribe, is the most influential. This is due to the fact that the Khalifah family, one of its sub-tribes, has ruled the islands without serious interruption for almost 200 years. Every member of the Khalifah family has the title of "shaykh." Along with the privileges and prestige he enjoys as a result of his position, he has certain obligations and restrictions on his conduct and manner of life. For instance, in recent years many Bahrain subjects, especially among the younger city population, have taken to wearing European dress. No member of the ruling family may do so.

The two other Sunni tribes of any importance are the Sadah and the Dawasir, the first because of its alleged sacred origin, the second because of its comparative wealth.[9]

Unlike the Shi'is, the Sunnis are relatively mobile. They depend for their livelihood on trade, pearling, fishing, and more recently on employment in the oil industry. Boat building also used to be a fairly important industry. It is very seldom that a Sunni is found engaged in agriculture as a life occupation except as a landowner.

As has been shown, among the two main native elements social division and social tensions rest on religious foundations. Religious affiliation determines to a considerable degree the social and economic position of the individual. When mass violence breaks out it has so far been in terms of Shi'is and Sunnis, never in terms of economic groups.

An interesting development in recent years is the stress of the dominant

[9] Most of the Dawasir returned in anger to the Arabian mainland in the early 1920's, soon after Shaykh Hamad, whom they disliked, assumed control. For the story of their return see Government of Bahrain, *Administrative Report for the Years 1926–1937* (Bahrain, 1937), pp. 8–9.

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia MJ1
BAHRAIN MZ.2

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Turks had previously established a small garrison, which was withdrawn in 1910. The ownership of the island of *Qrān*, about 36 miles NE. by E. of Ras el-Bidya', is undetermined. It has an anchorage on the S. side, and is frequented by fishermen from Bahrein, Musallamīyah, and Jinnah, who dry fish and make turtle oil.

C. BAHREIN

Area

B 101 131

The present Sheikhdom of Bahrein consists of the archipelago formed by the islands of *Bahrein*, *Muharraq*, *Umm Na'asān*, *Sitrah*, and *Nebi Sālih*, with a number of lesser islets and rocks. The whole forms a compact group almost in the middle of the gulf which separates the promontory of El-Qatar and the coast of Qatīf; the Sheikhs of Bahrein have had relations of a political nature with El-Qatar (see p. 328).

The principal island has an extreme length of 30 miles from N. to S. and a maximum breadth of 10 miles. Muharraq, which lies NE., and is separated from Bahrein by a strait 1½ miles broad, has a maximum diameter of 5½ miles, but owing to its horseshoe form contains little territory. Umm Na'asān, which is less than 4 miles by 2½ miles, lies 3 miles off the W. coast of the main island. Sitrah, separated from the E. coast by a narrow channel, has a length of 4½ miles from N. to S., and a maximum breadth of 1½ miles. Nebi Sālih, commonly called *Jezīrah*, lying in the inlet of Kabb on the E. coast of Bahrein, NW. of Sitrah, has a diameter of only ½ mile.

Physical Characteristics

B 133

Bahrein Island is mostly flat and low, but rises gradually to an interior plateau 100 to 200 ft. high, in the middle of which is an oval depression about 13 miles long from N. to S. by about 4 miles broad, containing the solitary hill Jebel Dukhān, about 440 ft. in height. The descent inwards from the plateau to the depression is in most places too steep to be practicable for animals; at the N. end there is a nearly vertical drop of 20 ft., followed by a slope of 30 ft. The plateau is extremely stony, presenting on the N. side a low cliff-line of about 15 ft., with a sandy plain below it, extending in all directions to the coast, and draining from W. to E. On the same side of the plateau is a great field of ancient tumuli covering about 12 square miles, called by the Arabs *Murāqīb*. A large inlet, Khōr

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
BAHRAIN MZR

361 Qasabīyah clear of the town, at the customs pier, and at the jetty
438 of the British Agency.

2. **Budeyya'**, near the NW. corner of Bahrein Island, stretches for about a mile along the sea with a depth of about 300 yards. It has three quarters with about 8,000 inhabitants, *Farīq el-'Amāmarah*, *Farīq ed-Dām*, and *Farīq el-Budayya'*, containing a considerable number of stone houses, five or six buildings of solid masonry with upper storeys, and a tower. The people are all Sunnis, the most numerous Arab communities belonging to the Dawāsir (800 houses) and 'Amāmarah (100 houses). There are a large number of negro slaves (450 houses) and free negroes (200 houses), with about 50 households of *Hūwalah*. Most of the people are engaged in the pearl-fisheries, and more than 100 boats are owned. The Dawāsir, whose Sheikh administers the town without interference from the Sheikh of Bahrein, chiefly occupy the Budayya' and Dām quarters, obtaining their water-supply from wells in the date-plantations of *Dirāz* and *Beni Jamrah* villages; the well of the 'Amāmarah quarter is a little to the E. of the houses.

2. *Muharraq*

101 This island lies immediately NE. of Bahrein, from which it is
131 separated by a narrow strait a mile and a half broad; it is of horse-shoe shape, with the open side to the S.; the maximum diameter is about 4 miles. The island is really a low sandbank surrounded by flat coral reefs which almost triple its surface at low tide; from this projects on the NW. a rocky spit called *Ras el-Khaseifah*, extending seaward for nearly 4 miles and constituting the chief danger to ships entering Manāmah harbour. Several marine
361 springs rise near the coasts of the island. There are some 15
438 villages or hamlets in addition to Muharraq town, the more important of which are: *'Arād*, on a promontory on the S. coast: 100 huts of *Bahārinah* date-growers, fishermen, and pearl-divers. There is a rectangular ruined fort, with sides about 90 ft. long, at the E. point of 'Arād Bay. Plantations with about 12,000 date-palms. *Buseitīn*, on the W. coast, 1 mile N. of Muharraq town: 400 houses, some of stone, but most of date-mats. The people are Sunnis, chiefly of the Madhāhakah tribe, owning about 50 boats, mostly used for pearl-fishing. Date-palms number about 1,000; carrots and lucerne are cultivated beneath the trees. Two wells in the date-grove, with brackish water. *Deir*, on NW. coast, 2 miles N. by E. of Muharraq town; 300 houses of mud or date-mats; 3 mosques. Inhabitants are *Bahārinah* engaged in the